

**Standing, Reef Fish, and Mackerel SSC  
Webinar Meeting Summary  
January 9, 2019  
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM**

The meeting of the Standing, Reef Fish, and Mackerel Scientific and Statistical Committees (SSC) was convened at 1:00 PM on January 9, 2019. The agenda was approved as written. The summary minutes of the August 2, 2018 Standing, Reef Fish, Mackerel and Shrimp meeting was approved as written. A motion was made to modify the summary minutes of the October 2-3, 2018 Standing, Reef Fish, and Socioeconomic SSC meeting as follows:

**Motion: To add to the October 2018 SSC Summary Report the following:**

The SSC further discussed the Draft Framework (Tab 5b) and generally agreed to follow the four criteria below specified in the Draft Framework as the basis for their peer reviews of stock assessments and for making catch level recommendations, until modified by an updated or final Framework.

2) *Peer review. . . .*

*a) The peer review evaluates the entirety of the assessment and explicitly and separately considers whether the assessment provides a good scientific basis for the four subsequent management actions outlined below. The review is of the scientific information, not of the subsequent determination:*

*i) Stock status relative to the overfishing status determination criteria (SDC) specified in the FMP;*

*ii) Stock status relative to the overfished SDC specified in the FMP;*

*iii) Implementation of established harvest control rules;*

*iv) Any proposed revisions to SDCs, harvest control rules, or other management actions.*

**Motion carried** unanimously.

The addition follows the second paragraph under the heading “*Best Scientific Information Available.*” Committee members discussed how the language would affect how the SSC reviews stock assessments, and were in agreement that the language clarified the role of the SSC and the determinations it is expected to make about the information presented in an assessment.

*King Mackerel Update Assessment Terms of Reference (TORs)*

Staff reviewed the TORs for the update assessment of SEDAR 38, which assessed the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) migratory group of king mackerel (Gulf king mackerel). The terminal year on the SEDAR schedule for the assessment was corrected to reflect that listed in the terms of reference, which is the 2017-2018 fishing year. The recreational data are analyzed on the same fishing year as the commercial data in the model, even though the recreational fishing year follows the calendar year. Update stock assessments are conducted in-house with the analytical team, which can reach out to other partners as necessary to fill data gaps and answer questions. The assessment is ultimately peer-

reviewed by the SSC.

Committee members discussed the inclusion of research priorities and identification of the degree of analysis which may be necessary for the subsequent stock assessment. The SEDAR process is moving away from the current “benchmark-standard-update” assessment framework to the “research track-operational assessment-interim analysis” framework, under which the current standard and update assessment tracks would fall under the operational assessment category. Staff added the following language to the TORs as TOR #4, which the SSC accepted after some minor wordsmithing:

*To the extent practical, provide recommendations of future research to be conducted on Gulf of Mexico migratory group king mackerel, and any additional analyses which should be considered during the subsequent stock assessment.*

**Motion:** The SSC recommends that the SEDAR 38 TORs for the Gulf King Mackerel Update Assessment be adopted as amended.

**Motion carried** unanimously.

#### *Cobia Update Assessment TORs*

Staff reviewed the TORs for the update assessment of SEDAR 28, which assessed the Gulf migratory group of cobia (Gulf cobia). The terminal year for the assessment will be 2018. The Committee added the same TOR to cobia which was added to the king mackerel update assessment TORs:

*To the extent practical, provide recommendations of future research to be conducted on Gulf of Mexico migratory group cobia, and any additional analyses which should be considered during the subsequent stock assessment.*

**Motion:** The SSC recommends that the SEDAR 28 TORs for the Gulf Cobia Update Assessment be adopted as amended.

**Motion carried** unanimously.

#### *Vermilion Snapper Standard Assessment TORs*

Staff reviewed the TORs for SEDAR 67, which is a standard assessment of vermilion snapper. The terminal year for the assessment will be 2017. The Committee asked why the terminal year for vermilion snapper was different from Gulf king mackerel and Gulf cobia. Staff elaborated on data processing and scheduling conflicts which must constantly be resolved by SEDAR and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC), and indicated that a terminal year of 2017 was as up-to-date as could be expected for vermilion snapper given the current assessment schedule.

Staff reviewed proposed modifications to the vermilion snapper TORs, which include the following:

*Under TOR #2:*

- *Clearly indicate the data sources considered for determining recreational landings and effort (state, federal, and/or other surveys), whether those data sources were used, and if not, explain why.*
- *Combine FWC and NMFS video surveys into a single index, if possible.*
- *Obtain age or length composition data from shrimp bycatch fisheries to better inform shrimp selectivity estimates, if possible.*

*Under TOR #5:*

*Scenarios to Evaluate (preliminary, to be modified as appropriate)*

- 1.  $F_{OY} = 75\% F_{MSY}$  (presently  $F_{30\%SPR}$ ; project when OY will be achieved)*
- 2.  $F_{Current} =$  Geometric mean of most recent three years*

The Committee discussed the impact of the updated Marine Recreational Information Program survey data, calibrated for the new Fishing Effort Survey and Access Point Angler Intercept Survey data, on the assessment. Staff and SEDAR clarified that this comparison and analysis was planned already as part of SEDAR 67, and acknowledged that substantial work was still to be completed to easily transition between adjusted and non-adjusted recreational catch and effort data. Staff proposed consideration of the state surveys also, with direction provided to the analytical team to detail any shortcomings which may prevent a state survey from being used in SEDAR 67. The remaining recommended modifications to the SEADR 67 TORs reflect changes identified in the previous assessment of vermilion snapper (SEDAR 45).

**Motion:** The SSC recommends that the SEDAR 67 TORs for the Gulf of Mexico Vermilion Snapper Standard Assessment (SEDAR 67) be adopted as amended.

**Motion carried** unanimously.

#### *Vermilion Snapper Standard Assessment Schedule*

Staff reviewed the proposed schedule for SEDAR 67, which will have a single combined data and assessment workshop in Miami in November 2019, and several webinars.

**Motion:** The SSC adopts the SEDAR 67 Vermilion Snapper Schedule of Events.

**Motion carried** unanimously.

The Committee solicited volunteers from those present to attend the workshop and webinars as panelists, with the following individuals committing their participation: Drs. Jim Nance, Will Patterson, Sean Powers, and Kai Lorenzen.

*SEDAR 68: Scamp Stock Identification Workshop Participants.*

The SEDAR 68 assessment of scamp will be a research track assessment, designed to allow for the exploration of solutions to complex problems which can arise during the assessment process. This approach was selected for scamp, as it has not been assessed previously. SEDAR 68 will be conducted jointly with the South Atlantic Council. The biological stock of scamp is presently delineated at the jurisdictional boundary between the Gulf and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, near the Dry Tortugas. A stock identification process will be held over two webinars in the late spring/early summer of 2019. The Committee solicited volunteers from those present to attend the webinars as panelists, with the following individuals committing their participation: Mr. Doug Gregory, Mr. John Mareska, and Dr. Jim Tolan. The Committee will solicit volunteers for the SEDAR 68 Data Workshop, scheduled for late October of 2019, at its March 2019 meeting.

*SEDAR Schedule for 2021*

Staff reviewed the proposed stock assessments for 2021, with SEDAR reminding the Committee that due to the partial shutdown of the federal government, and the fluid nature of resource tasking over time, that the assessment schedule beyond 2019 should be considered “subject to change.” The Committee asked whether the TORs for the proposed operational assessments of gag and greater amberjack had been approved by the SSC. Staff recounted that the SSC approved a scope of work for those assessments, which was forwarded to the SEFSC for review. Final TORs will be presented to the SSC for adoption at a later date. Committee members asked if it would be possible to include more than the presently scheduled research track/operational assessments for red snapper and scamp, and the operational assessments for gag and greater amberjack. Staff replied that it was unlikely at this time; however, changes in staffing and analytical capacity at the SEFSC may tender a different answer later. Further, the SSC may request interim analyses for species with accepted peer-reviewed stock assessments which do not have an assessment listed on the SEDAR schedule in the current year. Interim analyses may take two to four months to complete.

**Motion:** The SSC adopts the Gulf of Mexico SEDAR Schedule for 2021.

**Motion carried** unanimously.

*Other Business*

The Committee discussed its participation in the National SSC meeting, about which Council staff have not yet been contacted. Dr. Kai Lorenzen volunteered to participate on behalf of the Committee.

Dr. Joe Powers indicated that he was working on a white paper to bring before the Committee in response to a presentation at the October 2018 SSC meeting by Dr. Lee Anderson, which detailed new ideas for Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Committee. Dr. Powers will provide this white paper once it is complete.

Dr. Dave Chagaris expressed an interest in presenting ongoing collaborative ecosystem research to the Committee at the March 2019, or other appropriate future, SSC meeting. The subject work is a collaboration between the University of Florida and the SEFSC, and includes a suite of models to inform fisheries management in the Gulf. The research group is eager to obtain timely feedback from the SSC, which will accelerate the development of their models and the likelihood of those models being used in upcoming stock assessments.

#### *Timing of the March 2019 SSC Meeting*

Staff are considering moving the March 2019 SSC meeting up by one week. The meeting is presently scheduled for March 12-14, 2019. A Doodle Poll will be sent to Committee members to indicate their availability.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. on January 9, 2019.

#### **Standing SSC**

Joe Powers, Chair  
Kai Lorenzen, Vice-Chair  
Luiz Barbieri  
Harry Blanchet  
Lee Anderson  
Bob Gill  
Douglas Gregory  
Walter Keithly  
Camp Matens  
James Nance  
Will Patterson  
Sean Powers  
Ken Roberts  
Steven Scyphers  
James Tolan  
Benny Gallaway (listen only)

#### **Reef Fish SSC**

Jason Adriance (also Mackerel SSC)  
Judson Curtis  
John Mareska (also Mackerel SSC)

#### **Mackerel SSC**

Kari MacLauchlin-Buck

#### **Council Staff**

John Froeschke  
Ryan Rindone  
Charlotte Schiaffo  
Carrie Simmons  
Karen Hoak  
Morgan Kilgour  
Jessica Matos  
Bernadine Roy

#### **Council Members**

Bob Shipp  
Tom Frazer

#### **Others**

Gina Alvarez  
Steven Atran  
Julia Byrd  
Michael Drexler  
Megan Fleming  
Chad Hanson  
Wade Hardy

Hannah Hart  
Charlotte Marin  
Jim McKay  
Julie Neer  
Frank Parker  
Erica Phelan  
Carly Somerset  
Trevor Moncrief  
Keith Ballman  
Taylor Borel  
James Bruce  
Fabio Caltabellotta  
Tommy Elkins  
Kimberly Krause  
Costa Kouzounis  
Michael Norberg  
Luke Norris  
Jeff Pulver  
Ashford Rosenberg  
George Sedberry  
Fred Tewell  
Mark Vinson  
Roy Crabtree  
Chad Hickman